

I have had the honor of working closely with JEFF on the Senate Judiciary Committee since I came to the Senate, and I am proud to call him a friend. Those who have watched him day-in and day-out understand his stalwart commitment to the rule of law and his deep and abiding concern for our country.

Of course, we wouldn't be Senators if we didn't sometimes disagree with each other. It is just normal, but Senator SESSIONS has always engaged with seriousness and cordiality and the kind of civility this Chamber and this country could use more of. By the strength of his arguments, he has helped us all to see the weaknesses in our own arguments as he has worked together with his colleagues to try to help us build consensus, which is the only way we get anything done and the way our constitutional system was designed. Only by building consensus can we move our country forward.

We are going to miss Senator SESSIONS in the Senate when he moves on to the executive branch as Attorney General, but it is even more important, at this point in this country's history, to have a champion of the Constitution and the rule of law at the Department of Justice and to help restore the reputation of that Department.

As I said earlier, for years now—during the course of Attorney General Holder's tenure and unfortunately succeeded by Attorney General Lynch—the Department of Justice has twisted the Constitution to further the President's political agenda.

I give just one example. When Congress was performing its legitimate oversight responsibilities into a gun-running operation gone wrong called Fast and Furious, Attorney General Holder was called before the Senate Judiciary Committee, called before our corresponding House committee, and simply defied those committees' lawful and appropriate oversight responsibilities over what the Department of Justice was doing.

To my knowledge, this resulted in his having been the first Attorney General to be held in contempt of Congress—a sitting Attorney General of the United States held in contempt of Congress.

Unfortunately, the Obama administration put politics ahead of our national commitment to the rule of law and too often demonized those who worked to protect us. I have every confidence that Senator SESSIONS, as the Attorney General of the United States, the head of the Department of Justice, and the Trump administration will defend the rule of law and will use his expertise in the Constitution to play an essential role in our President-elect's Cabinet. As a 15-year veteran of the Department, Senator SESSIONS understands better than most what needs to be done to help the Department of Justice refocus its responsibilities and its priorities.

Here is the bottom line. We need people in the highest rungs of our govern-

ment who will ensure our Constitution is preserved, protected, and defended. Senator SESSIONS, as the next Attorney General of the United States, will do just that.

GETTING OUR WORK DONE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, while the President-elect is considering additional nominees to fill his Cabinet, we in the Senate—working together with our House colleagues—have our own responsibilities to fulfill before the end of this year.

Most pressing is legislation to fund the government, something that unfortunately has been hindered by our Democratic colleagues slow-walking the appropriations process. Actually, calling it slow-walking is a little too generous. What they did is block the normal appropriations process, where the 12 separate appropriations bills would be voted out of committee—which they were, on a bipartisan basis—but then they would come across the floor of the Senate where amendments would be offered, and we would actually vote on them before sending them to the President to be signed into law.

Instead of this normal process—which is transparent, it is bipartisan, in the best traditions of the Senate—we were denied the opportunity to do that, resulting now in our need to pass a year-end continuing resolution, kicking the funding of the government over to perhaps sometime in the spring. This was strictly as a result of the gamesmanship of our colleagues, many of them blocking the same appropriations bills they voted for, on a bipartisan basis, before the Appropriations Committee itself.

Despite those obstructions, we have actually tried to do some good work. We passed our first bicameral budget since 2009. As I said, the Appropriations Committee voted out all 12 appropriations bills.

Despite the obstructionism we have seen and despite where we find ourselves, I ask all of us to take stock of where we are, given what we saw happen in the historic election of November 8. I think the American people have made very clear they want the government to function and they don't have a lot of tolerance for gamesmanship or partisanship or obstruction, but we cannot move forward with other substantial legislative goals until we address funding for the remainder of this fiscal year. While I am disappointed we find ourselves where we are today—having to pass another short-term continuing resolution until next March or so—this waiting until the last minute is not a good way to do business. I hope next year, with the new administration and with the leadership of Senator MCCONNELL, Speaker RYAN in the House, and with more cooperation from our Democratic colleagues, we can have a regular and open appropriations process, one that will serve the Amer-

ican people much better. It will certainly serve the interests of the Defense Department and other people who need to be able to plan beyond 2 months or 3 months in terms of what they can do with the money Congress is going to appropriate.

Until then, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to set aside the disputes we have had over the last year and the election itself—which I know some are finding it easier to see the results of the election in the rearview mirror than others, as evidenced by the comments I heard from the Senator from Massachusetts when I came to the floor—but we need to pass a bill that will fund the government and allow us to move forward. I hope we can do that. Then, once we have completed the work for this year, we can come back in the new year with a new administration, a new Congress, and recommit ourselves to doing the people's work and doing it in a consensus-building, bipartisan way that listens to what our constituents are telling us they want, not the siren call of the people who think they know better than they do what is good for them but to listen to the American people and then get about the work of passing legislation which promotes their interests. This is first to assure for the common defense but, secondly, to make sure our economy starts to grow again so people who want to find work or want better paying jobs can find work available so they can provide for their families and pursue their American dream.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows.